



NEWSLETTER

The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

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H.E. Hon. Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister
Address on the occasion of the Commemoration of the
200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the British Empire
Atlantic Slave Trade

26th March 2007

Citizens, residents, friends of Antigua and Barbuda

Today our nation commemorates the 200th Anniversary of the abolition of the British Empire Atlantic Slave Trade. The actual Act to abolish this heinous international crime was passed in the British Parliament on 25th March 1807.

This Act is significant because it marked the beginning of the end of human slavery. The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act paved the way for the better-known Act that abolished slavery in the British Empire some twenty-six (26) years later.

From the 15th to the 19th Century an estimated fifteen(15) million black Africans were forcibly transported across the Atlantic Ocean; millions perished from the weight of the chains that bounded them and the wretched and inhumane conditions of the slave ships.

Those who survived faced yet another brutal fate, as they were auctioned off into slavery on plantations in South America, Central America, North America, and the Caribbean, including right here in Antigua and Barbuda.

Today, two hundred years later, as a nation of people descended from African slaves, it is important for us to remember the millions who perished in the "Middle Passage".

It is equally important for us to honour those whose enslaved labour, blood, sweat and tears fuelled the sugar plantations, enriching the colonial empires of Europe. Today's prosperous nations prosper precisely because of the slave labour of our ancestors.

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The Atlantic Slave Trade and slavery itself were two of the most lucrative commercial institutions, resulting in riches and economic prosperity not only to the slave traders and slave owners, but to whole empires. At the same time these institutions were brutal, oppressive, and resulted in the horrific deaths of millions.

The Atlantic Slave Trade uprooted and destroyed whole families and communities from Africa. Traders trafficked their sons and daughters across the Atlantic Ocean in the hulls of ships in some of the most inhumane conditions known to man.

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A MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY DR CARL ROBERTS, HIGH COMMISSIONER



has left us with a legacy of improved health surveillance. According to Dr Eldonna Boisson of the Epidemiology Division of the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC), the hosting of the CWC 2007 in the Region has enhanced the health surveillance systems in the region. She went on to state that "health personnel have been trained, additional human resources provided to countries and CAREC to enhance surveillance capacity, surveillance systems established, global disease and outbreak surveillance enhanced, and also laboratory capacity strengthened".

Dr Boisson also added that a mass gathering surveillance system (MGSS) was established in the region in the nine host countries to help detect outbreaks or possible acts of biological terrorism and enable a daily review of data, allowing prompt and appropriate public health interventions and responses. (Source: *Antigua Sun - Monday 16th April 2007*)

A similar case can be made for our security systems, our social services and other medical services. In particular, over 300 special security forces from our sister CARICOM states were in Antigua and Barbuda assisting with the safety of everyone during the hosting of the Super 8 Series.

I am delighted to observe all of this happenings for it reinforces my belief that as a Region more of this should be happening. As someone who has worked across the region I have heard many complaints of the difficulties associated with travel across the region. The free movement enjoyed by citizens of member states of the European Community would be a dream for any West Indies/Caribbean citizen.

Though there are many calls for answers to questions about the level of expenditure associated with the activities in Antigua and Barbuda, there can be no gainsaying that the hosting of this event would bring worthwhile benefits in the long run.

Listening to the PM's address to the nation on the 12th April, one cannot but also feel the sense of pride in little Antigua and Barbuda. It marked the coming to fruition of many plans and the end of many sleepless nights for the coordinators and members of government. As the Prime Minister stated "one of the legacies of Antigua and Barbuda hosting the CWC Super 8 Matches is our ability to achieve despite the odds and criticisms. It demonstrated that as a people we can put aside our differences and join forces in achieving what is best for our nation".

A Time to Reflect

Tuesday March 27 to Monday 9th April, marked an exciting period in the history of Antigua and Barbuda. During this period, several matches in the current ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 were played in the state. The crowds came, the matches were played and the results were recorded for history.

Now that the 2nd stage - Super 8 Series matches are over, there are some questions which are being asked around the islands - "Was the effort worth it? Will we ever see the full benefits expected from that level of expenditure? How do we draw out future benefits from all this investment? What lessons can we learn?"

Let me make a very bold statement. The effort was well worth our while! Definitely yes. Why do I say this? Prior to the planning and eventual hosting of this event in Antigua and Barbuda, the spotlight has never been so brightly focused on so many aspects of life in the state at the same time. This was indeed good for us, for we realised that many things which we were taking our time to develop, or on the other hand has considered as acceptable were certainly not the case, and needed to be radically altered sooner rather than later.

Take the case of this aspect of our health service. As has been pointed out elsewhere the hosting of the ICC event

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My fellow citizens, friends

Some may question the wisdom of us commemorating such an anniversary as the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Some may even mistake our acts of remembrance and observance for celebration. But let me assure the nation of Antigua and Barbuda that the story of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade deserves to be told and retold, as it is a part of our history and as such has shaped our present reality and gives direction to our future.

My fellow Antiguan and Barbudans,

We remember those who perished in the Trans-Atlantic Slave voyages and pay homage to those who survived and were consequently forced into slavery so that their story - our story - can be told, and the horrors exposed.

By continuing to expose the horrors of the slave trade and slavery we can bring awareness to the social, cultural and economic impact on our societies today. Our culture, our language and who we are as a people and as a nation is a consequence of a history of slavery and the slave trade.

To some it is uncomfortable to speak of such horrors, to others it is a past they wish to remain covered, hidden. My fellow citizens, as descendents of African slaves on whose slave labour rich nations have been built, we have absolutely nothing to be ashamed of, but much to be proud of.

The British Parliamentarian William Wilberforce, who orchestrated the passing of the Act, is well-known and celebrated for his act of humanity in devoting his life to bringing an end to the British Slave Trade.

We recognize the important role he played in this significant point in

history. However, more important is the role played by the slaves themselves, those who, through rebellions, personal acts of resistance and defiance in their own right were instrumental in forcing the British Parliament to end the slave trade two hundred years ago.

Fellow-citizens, to those who may ask "why should we remember? Why should this horrific story be told? Have we not come far?" To this I say, yes we have come far, but we have a lot farther to go.

The slave trade ended two hundred (200) years ago, but it was only five(5) years ago, in September 2001, at a United Nations Conference in South Africa, the World Conference on Racism and Xenophobia, that slavery was declared a crime against humanity in a bid to gain international recognition for the injustices of the slave trade.

Fellow citizens,

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is the greatest horror in the history of mankind, yet it has never been adjudicated. Our forefathers were victims of this crime against humanity and we are a part of them. By exposing the crime we expose the victors, but by exposing the victors we also expose the victims. There is no shame in the story of our forefathers and what they endured as victims of this crime against humanity.

Ours is a legacy of slavery, but we take no shame in this. Instead, we should be inspired by the triumph over slavery and the slave trade.

Let us take from this day of remembrance a sense of empowerment.

Let us be inspired by the struggles of our ancestors, and let us be empowered to move forward and finish the job.

Let us be motivated to carry our nation forward into a future of greater economic and social prosperity with renewed vigour - it is the way to honour the courage of our forefathers - and to create a sense of pride in how far we have come as a people, as a nation.

My fellow Antiguan and Barbudans,

The slave trade must not be a forgotten crime against humanity, and as West Indian, as Afro-Caribbean, it is our duty to ensure that this does not happen.

In the words of the great CLR James, "The transformation of slaves, trembling in hundreds before a single white man, into a people able to organize themselves and defeat the most powerful nations of their day, is one of the great epics of revolutionary struggle and achievement."

Today we join with our CARICOM neighbours in commemorating the bicentenary anniversary of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Indeed my government is proud to have been a part of the initiative led by CARICOM Member States at the United Nations to get the international community to recognize this anniversary.

Such international recognition is important because it provides the opportunity to carry forward the fight for justice. With all the modern treaties and international statutes and recognition of the slave trade as a crime against humanity, this crime remains unpunished; the entities remain unaccountable for their participation and profiteering.

I thank the local organizing Committee under the Chairmanship of

Dorbrene O'Marde for putting together an educational and exciting programme of commemoration.

It is the government's desire for you to remain as a grouping and continue to organize educational activities sensitizing the public on the importance of remembering the abolition of trans-atlantic slave trade and slavery itself.

I would also like to commend Minister Counselor Ms. Janil Greenaway and her team at the United Nations for working closely with our CARICOM Colleagues in their efforts to have today dedicated in memory of our fallen ancestors.

My fellow Antiguans and Barbudans,

Progress may be slow in the fight for justice for the decedents of slaves, but we must not give up. As a community of sovereign nations, Antigua and Barbuda and the other CARICOM member states consider it necessary for the international community to become accountable for this crime against humanity.

The commemoration of this anniversary gives our nation and the world an opportunity to make progress in repairing the damage of 400 years of slavery, so that those who profited from such a crime can be urged to take responsibility for rectifying the effects that remain today.

At the same time the commemoration of this anniversary affords us the opportunity to raise the level of our national consciousness; to bring about a sense of pride in ourselves and to let this pride manifest in our everyday lives.

My fellow Antiguans and Barbudans, let the occasion of this 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-

Atlantic Slave Trade serve as a source of motivation for us to continue to aspire to achieve great things, as individuals, as communities and as a young nation.

Let us take from the stories of our ancestors and the unknown faces of the millions who died in the "Middle Passage" a sense of pride in how far we have come and how much we have endured; let us be empowered by their story to go farther, to strive for greater success and to be guided by a sense of morals, purposefulness and diligence. And may we embrace the future with a sense of pride, backed by political and economic empowerment.

Thank you and may God bless us all.



Financial Services Regulatory Commission commences overhaul of the Interactive Gaming and Interactive Wagering Regulations

The Financial Services Regulatory Commission announced that it has commenced the overhaul of the Interactive Gaming and Interactive Wagering Regulations which govern the operations of online gaming companies licenced by the state.

The review follows a statement made by Dr. the Honourable L. Errol Cort, Minister of Finance and the Economy at a press conference on February 26, 2007. Substantively the amendments will seek to reinforce Antigua and Barbuda's compliance and

commitment to international best practices and best-known industry standards.

The Minister stated he is in full support of the initiative, as it will further solidify Antigua and Barbuda's unique position amongst e-gaming jurisdiction's in the development, regulation and supervision of Internet gaming operations. The revision will also take into consideration key areas where the industry and commercial dynamics of online gaming have surpassed the present regulations

It was also noted that the exercise is two- fold, as the jurisdiction will take the opportunity to follow through on its commitment to the United Kingdom and other participating nations in a public communiqué to develop and implement international minimum standards for regulating remote gaming. Ms. Kaye McDonald, Director of Gaming stated "We will improve our statutory requirements to further ensure licensees comply with international best-practices with regard to their social responsibilities by further restricting problem and underage gaming. We have historically, led the way with regards to ensuring player fairness and the prevention of financial crime and fraud - these amendments will ensure Antigua and Barbuda remains the world's premiere regulated interactive gaming jurisdiction in these areas."

The Commission is working closely with the Antigua and Barbuda Gaming Association to achieve the key objectives and will engage other stakeholders with vested interest in the sector and its development. A symposium will be held next week under the auspices of the Minister of Finance and the Economy, Dr. the Honourable. L. Errol Cort to review the amendments and to provide an opportunity to consult and discuss the

revisions. A draft of the regulations will be posted on the official Government's website prior to the meeting.

The Commission has engaged the services of Mr. Frank Catania of Catania Consulting and associate Dr. Joseph Kelly to assist in the regulatory exercise. Mr. Catania has experience as a gaming regulator, lawmaker and lawyer with extensive experience in gaming matters. Mr. Catania was a former Assistant Attorney General, Director of New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement and Deputy Speaker of the New Jersey General Assembly. As a lawyer, Mr. Catania focused on compliance and was selected by "Best Lawyers in America" as a top legal expert in gaming. His associate Dr. Joseph Kelly is widely regarded as an expert on Internet gaming law and his "Internet Gambling Law" article (26) (1) Wm. Mitchell Law Rev.) was cited three times as authority by the United States National Gambling Impact Study Commission. Both Mr. Frank Catania and Dr. Kelly previously assisted with updating and amending portions of the gaming regulations and are familiar with the workings of Antigua and Barbuda's Interactive Gaming and Wagering Regulations.

Antigua and Barbuda is not only one of the first countries to encourage the development of global trade in remote gaming and betting services but, more importantly, to regulate these services in a comprehensive, fair and transparent manner.



Antigua handed decisive victory in WTO gambling case

On the 30th March the World Trade Organisation (WTO) released the decision of a three-member panel established to assess the compliance of the United States with the 2005 ruling by the trade body against the United States in the dispute over Internet gambling brought by the Caribbean country of Antigua and Barbuda.

Antigua's original triumph in April 2005 is reaffirmed in this final report, with the WTO panel decisively ruling that the US has done nothing to comply with the original ruling. By rejecting US arguments that the country applies its laws against remote gambling in a non-discriminatory fashion, the WTO has handed Antigua a resounding victory, and offers hope to the global online gambling industry currently under siege by the US Department of Justice.

Dr. John W. Ashe, Antigua's Ambassador to the WTO, stated, "This is a smashing success for Antigua in every possible way. The report will sweep away any lingering doubt that Antigua has obtained a clear and convincing win over the United States in this matter. It is now time for the United States to meet its international trade obligations to Antigua and work with us in a constructive manner to resolve this dispute."

Featuring prominently in the WTO's new decision was the passage of the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) - a baldly protectionist measure to stamp out non-domestic supply of remote gambling services - and the high-profile prosecutions of a number of foreign service providers in recent months.

Following the 2005 decision of

the WTO's appeals body, the United States had asserted that it had only to clarify a "narrow" point of US law regarding horse racing in order to come into compliance with the ruling. Today's decision, while also noting that the United States had failed to provide any clarification at all on the horse racing issue, pointed out that Antigua had demonstrated that a "flourishing remote account wagering industry" exists in the United States, despite US claims that it prohibited all remote gambling throughout the country. Critically as well, the panel took note of the fact that US law does not prohibit remote gaming that occurs solely within the borders of a particular state - an exemption which was confirmed in the UIGEA.

"We are extremely pleased by this most positive report of the panel," announced The Honourable L. Errol Cort, Minister of Finance and the Economy for Antigua. "It vindicates all that we have been saying for years about the discriminatory trade practices of the United States in this area, and we look forward to the United States opening its markets on a fair and balanced basis as the WTO agreements and the international community require."

Kaye McDonald, Antigua's Director of Gaming, expressed her relief at the decision, "The principles in this well-crafted opinion will be clear to everyone. This really is a landmark day for our country and I simply could not be more pleased."

Although the United States may appeal this latest finding back to the appeals body of the WTO, the head of Antigua's legal team, Mark Mendel, believes that the chances of reversal are remote. "The panel's logic is impeccable and the law and facts are just as much in our favour as they could possibly be. The United States

on one hand prohibits competition in remote gambling from Antigua while on the other promoting and protecting a massive domestic industry. If the WTO agreements apply under any scenario, they apply here.”

We are a small, twin-island nation in the Caribbean Sea, one of the

smallest WTO members, with a population of only about 80,000. We have dedicated significant resources since the early 1990s in an attempt to diversify our economy with a closely regulated and supervised cross-border gaming industry. Despite having offered on many occasions to work with US officials on a cooperative basis to ensure

the safety and fairness of the Antiguan services offered to American consumers, Antigua's efforts have been consistently rebuffed, with US officials opting instead to embark on an aggressive assault on the offshore provision of gaming services.

UN Ambassador Dr. John W. Ashe signs the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and its Optional Protocol at the signing ceremony in the United Nations General Assembly Hall. Looking on are Mr. Leslie Emanuel of Disabled Peoples' International; Ambassador Conrod Hunte, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN; and Ms. Gillian Joseph, First Secretary in the country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.



Island's oldest property to be restored back to its former glory

Work has now started to restore Hodges Bay House in Hodges Bay which is believed to be the oldest occupied house on the island. The house which was originally built in 1690 is now being sensitively restored back to its former glory and will form part of a new residential and boutique hotel development called 'Elle Antigua'.

Situated on Hodges Bay Road, the Hodges Bay House was built by its owner, the British Commander Hodge, who ran a sugar and cotton plantation on the estate. Built from bricks and stones, originally used as ballast in the ships that arrived frequently from England, the

building retains some of its original features. These include a giant 17th century open hearth fireplace (which was large enough to roast a whole cow) in an original room known as 'The Battery', and the mountings steps that were used to climb onto a horse drawn carriage. The Mill itself has been incorporated into the reception area of the nearby Sunsail Colonna Hotel.

The British architects Wm Saunders will be responsible for ensuring these original aspects remain intact and in deed become a feature of the new boutique hotel, alongside other historical artefacts found on the site.

Agnes Meeker, President of the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda, is delighted the house is being renovated after many years of neglect. She says

“Any restoration of any historical building is to be commended and treasured. Too many have been lost over the years in Antigua with our Forts, Estate Houses, and in our Capital of St. Johns, due to lack of foresight. We are playing 'catch up' in this department with islands such as Barbados, St. Kitts and Jamaica, all of whom, have done a far better job of preserving their historical past.”

The Hodges Bay Estate, originally consisting of 200 acres, has been used for a variety of purposes over the years including the farming of tobacco, sugar and cotton and for cattle rearing. It was rebuilt by Maybert and Dalmer Dew in 1939 who kept the original widened doorways which were built to allow passage for the hooped crinoline skirts of the time.

The home was last resided in by the dentist Dr M Francis who vacated it six years ago.

The Estate was bought by local company Boutique Hotel Ltd. Directors Lanny Smikle and Linda Hillaire plan to renovate the building and turn it into a five star boutique hotel with 22 luxury residences in the grounds leading down to the sea. The freehold properties will be built in a colonial style with a modern twist . They will include two bedroom waterfront cottages with decked verandas and plunge pools, romantic two bedroom country garden cottages and contemporary two and three bedroom townhouses.

The hotel and residences will have a 24 hour butler service, with an emphasis on providing 'a home from home' experience. There will be a health and beauty spa, and fine dining restaurant that will be open to local residents.

The properties will be sold on a buy-to-let basis with owners guaranteed a minimum 6% p.a return on their investment for two years, with six weeks usage per year.

Prices for a 2 bed country garden cottage (1520 sq.ft) start at US\$628,748, a 3 bed town house (2582 sq. ft) start at US\$601,085 and a 2 bed waterfront cottage (2744 sq. ft) start at US\$1,156,151. All prices include fixtures and furnishings.

Elle Antigua is due for completion by November 2008.

***(Right, top to bottom)
Scenes of Cricket World
Cup at the Sir Vivian
Richards Stadium
in Antigua***



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Here is just a quick list of some of the present benefits which should last for some time to come:-

- **A new Sir Vivian Richards Multi Purpose Stadium**
- **Expansion of the departure lounge at the VCB Airport**
- **Expansion of the baggage claims area**
- **Street lighting along the Sir Sydney Walling and Sir George Walter Highways**
- **Improved roads as a commencement of a comprehensive road programme**
- **Improvements to the airport tarmac and runway**
- **Extension of the runway 240 metres westwards**
- **Completion of the parallel taxi-way and linking it to the existing runway**
- **Widening of some of the sidewalks in the city**
- **The cleaning up of the city and beautification of many of its buildings**
- **More awareness of Antigua and Barbuda Sailing/Yachting capabilities**
- **Transfer of much needed security/policing skills to the local unit**
- **The creation of CARICOM Single Domestic Space**

It is now very important that we maximise these assets and enhance the immediate returns of the above benefits well into the future. The new Sir Vivian Richards Stadium must be maintained in excellent condition and to full use hosting many more local, regional and international events in the coming months and years.

One very good lesson which should be learned from this is the detail required for development, the co-ordination between various branches of government and the many publics needed to host major events. A perfect example of what to avoid is the APUA/PWD issue and high additional cost associated with the APUA Golden Grove Water Mains project. Proper co-ordination will ensure and preserve the functionality and esthetics of the road surface of newly refurbished highways.

In spite of the above commendations must be extended to the Ministers of Government, the manager of CWC Antigua and his team, the greeters, the volunteers and in fact the entire team who worked so hard to make the hosting of the Super 8 Series of matches possible. May we likewise rise to the occasion each and every time that it is required in the future. May our nation continue to

grow with God's help and its citizens increase in national pride as the state matures.

Dr Carl Roberts
High Commissioner



(Above) Further scenes of Cricket world Cup in Antigua and Barbuda